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TESTIMONY OF  
REPRESENTATIVE ELISSA WRIGHT  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 41<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT

*COMMITTEE BILL No. 5460, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PLAN FOR EMERGING BIOSCIENCE  
AND PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT*

*Commerce Committee Public Hearing  
March 12, 2013*

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perrone, members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of *Committee Bill No. 5460, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PLAN FOR EMERGING BIOSCIENCE AND PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT*.

This proposal would require the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to develop a plan to stimulate innovation, support business formation, and spur growth in start-up and spin-off niches centered on existing strengths in pharmaceuticals and bioscience, including other investments of this kind, for example in biotechnical engineering, robotic fabrication, clean energy solutions and other entrepreneurial activities associated with historic core industries in Southeastern Connecticut

Our region has a significant impact on the state's economy, providing nearly one-third of tourism spending and half of defense jobs in Connecticut. Groton is the historic home of Pfizer which has grown to a global pharmaceutical giant on our shores.

Now as the worst of the recession begins to pass, we in Southeastern Connecticut need to demonstrate that we can continue to take advantage of our many advantages – a skilled and educated workforce; an impressive array of academic and research institutions; available infrastructure to support research projects and start-up firms; and several locational advantages including an area rich in amenities and a geographic nexus in proximity to some of the most dynamic research, economic and innovation centers in the nation – and that we can leverage these assets to reverse a shift in employment structure and regain some of the recent losses in the pharmaceutical sector.

The region is perfectly situated to strengthen partnerships with the many elite colleges, universities, and research institutions in our midst, including but not limited to the University of Connecticut and UConn Avery Point, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Connecticut College, Wesleyan University, Trinity College, Yale

University, the Coast Guard Research and Development Center, and Three Rivers Community College in areas of science, technology and innovation, including marine science, the life sciences, advanced manufacturing technology, homeland security and clean energy industries.

An increased commitment by the state to bolster funding for research and innovation in emerging bioscience and pharmaceutical fields will be a catalyst for future growth. If we succeed, Southeastern Connecticut will be a guide for other communities to improve capacity, resilience, and economic diversification to help grow jobs and build a stronger, broad-based economy going forward.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to be heard on this issue today.